

Abstract

Healthcare waste contains the waste produced by healthcare facilities including waste generated from any healthcare procedures. Of all healthcare wastes, 10% – 25% are hazardous. Sharp waste, infectious waste, pharmaceutical waste, pathological waste, cytotoxic waste, chemical waste, and radioactive waste are some of the types of them. Minimizing waste generation, waste segregation, waste collection, waste transportation, waste storage, waste treatment, and disposal are the key steps in healthcare waste management.

This study was conducted to identify hazardous waste generation pattern, management, and their associated factors in government hospitals in the Regional Health Service area, Ampara. A descriptive cross-sectional study was conducted in 26 secondary and primary care hospitals. All 26 heads of the institutions and 581 healthcare workers in the hospitals were recruited. The waste quantity and composition assessment forms, observational checklist, and self-administered questionnaires were used for data collection. Relative frequencies and mean scores were used for descriptive analysis. Significant associations were assessed by the chi-square test and Fisher's exact test.

The study recorded 100% (n=26) response rate of head of the institutions and 94.3% (n=548) response rate of HCWs. The hazardous waste generation was 0.35 Kg per patient per day in base hospitals. Healthcare waste management status of the hospitals was positively and significantly associated with the age of healthcare workers (p=0.021), the availability of a healthcare waste management plan in the hospital (p=0.018), availability of a focal point on healthcare waste management activities (p=0.031), and availability of a mechanism for regular staff training (p=0.046). About 96.4% had satisfactory knowledge of hazardous healthcare waste management. Almost 91.4% (n=501) were with positive attitudes. Knowledge of the participants was positively and significantly associated with the job category (p<0.001), educational qualifications (p<0.001), and working experience (p=0.007) of the participants. Attitudes of healthcare workers were positively and significantly associated with job category (p<0.001), educational qualifications (p<0.001), and working experience (p=0.027).

Developing healthcare waste management plans, nominating a focal point, establishing a regular training mechanism, allocating a separate budget, and establishing healthcare waste management committees in hospitals were recommended.

Keywords : Hazardous waste, Generation pattern, Healthcare waste management, Government hospitals